



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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EEA Secretary Bowles Joins Wildlife Officials to Band Peregrine Falcon Chicks at Marriott's Custom House *Downtown Boston peregrine nest is occupied by one of 15 territorial pairs in Massachusetts*

BOSTON – Four peregrine falcon chicks hatched atop the Observation Tower at Marriott's Custom House – the state's most productive peregrine nest site – received identifying leg bands today at the hands of the Commonwealth's top wildlife officials.

Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) Secretary Ian Bowles and Department of Fish and Game (DFG) Commissioner Mary Griffin took part in the state's annual effort to band chicks at all peregrine falcon nests across Massachusetts during May and June. This year, DFG's Division of Fisheries and Wildlife is monitoring the success of 15 nesting pairs.

Absent from the entire East Coast 40 years ago due to exposure to the pesticide DDT, peregrine falcons have made a comeback thanks to the banning of DDT in 1972, protection under the Endangered Species Act, and widespread restoration efforts. Here in Massachusetts, where the last historically active nest was recorded in Great Barrington in 1955, the number of territorial peregrine pairs climbed to its pre-DDT level of 14 for the first time last year. While still listed as Endangered under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act, peregrines were removed from the federal Endangered Species List in 1999.

"Peregrine falcons are one of the Commonwealth's great wildlife restoration stories," Secretary Bowles said. "The efforts of our Division of Fisheries and Wildlife have helped bring this species back from the brink. With pairs nesting all across the state – including four here in Boston, peregrines are making a steady recovery in the Commonwealth."

Restoring the state's breeding population of peregrine falcons was the first project of the Non-game and Endangered Species Program (now the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species

Program) created in 1983. The Commonwealth recorded its first post-restoration peregrine falcon nest in 1987 at Marriott's Custom House – and that site has hosted a pair of falcons consistently every year since then. As of today, 68 chicks have been banded at this site, and they have subsequently been found nesting as nearby as Quincy and as distant as New York City.

Other Massachusetts peregrine falcon nesting locations include sites in Worcester, Springfield, Sunderland, Holyoke, Amherst, Fall River, Quincy, Lawrence, Lowell, Saugus, West Roxbury, and Erving.

"I am very excited to lend a hand in the conservation and monitoring effort for these magnificent birds," said Department of Fish and Game Commissioner Mary Griffin. "I would like to thank the folks from Marriott Corporation for being a steadfast partner with our Division of Fisheries and Wildlife in the restoration of peregrine falcons here at Marriott's Custom House."

Roughly the size of crows, peregrine falcons are the fastest birds on earth – capable of diving at speeds up to 200 miles per hour. They prefer to nest on cliffs or man-made structures overlooking bodies of water, and are among the most widely distributed bird species in the world, inhabiting every continent except Antarctica. For more information about peregrine falcons, visit http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/nhesp/species_info/nhfacts/falco_peregrinus.pdf.

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